

diagnosis of bishop and presbyterian, but deduced from it different conclusions. The question which gave a topical point to their analysis was the rising issue of religious tolerance. Serenely indifferent to its spiritual significance, they found a practical reason for applauding it in the fact that the classes who were in the van of the Puritan movement, and in whom the Clarendon Code found its most prominent victims, were also those who led commercial and industrial enterprise. The explanation, they thought, was simple. A society of peasants could be homogeneous in its religion, as it was already homogeneous in the simple uniformity of its economic arrangements. A many-sided business community could escape constant friction and obstruction, only if it were free to absorb elements drawn from a multitude of different sources, and if each of those elements were free to pursue its own way of life, and—in that age the same thing—to practise its own religion.

Englishmen, as Defoe remarked, improved everything and invented nothing, and English economic organization had long been elastic enough to swallow Flemish weavers flying from Alva, and Huguenots driven from France*. But the traditional ecclesiastical system was not equally accommodating. It found

not only
the alien refugee, but its home-bred
sectaries, indigestible. Laud, reversing the policy of
Elizabethan
Privy Councils, which characteristically
thought di-'
versity of trades more important than unity
of religion,
had harassed the settlements of foreign
artisans at
Maidstone, Sandwich and Canterbury,^{1*}
and the
problem recurred in every attempt to
enforce con-
formity down to 1689* " The gaols were
crowded with
the most substantial tradesmen and
inhabitants, the
clothiers were forced from their houses, and
thousands
of workmen and women, whom they
employed, set to
starving*^{1*17} The Whig indictment of the
disastrous
effects of Tory policy recalls the picture
drawn by French